

Preventing Asthma Symptoms

If you have asthma, you have it all the time even if you don't feel it. That's why it's important to take care of your asthma each day so you can help prevent asthma symptoms. Managing your asthma may help you do more of the things you enjoy.

Help take care of your asthma by following these steps **every day**. Check the tips that will work for you, and write in your own ideas.

- 1 Follow your asthma action plan to know what to do based on your symptoms. If you don't have an asthma action plan, ask your healthcare provider to help you make one.

Things I can do to help with this:

Keep my asthma action plan where I will see it, like my refrigerator or mirror

Other: _____

- 2 Take your daily preventive asthma medicine, even when you feel fine, as directed by your provider. This can help **prevent asthma symptoms**.

Things I can do to help with this:

Keep my daily preventive asthma medicine next to my toothbrush to help me remember it

Other: _____

- 3 Always keep your rescue medicine, like a rescue inhaler, with you. This can help in case you have **sudden asthma symptoms**.

Things I can do to help with this:

Keep my rescue inhaler near my keys or cell phone

Other: _____

- 4 Avoid your asthma triggers whenever you can.

Things I can do to help with this:

Keep my pet out of the house, or at least out of my bedroom

Stay inside when pollen levels are high

Other: _____

- 5 Monitor your symptoms. Notice what symptoms you have, and where and when you have them. These are the most common asthma symptoms:

• Coughing • Wheezing • Shortness of breath • Chest tightness

Things I can do to help with this:

Keep notes on my symptoms and show them to my provider

Other: _____

(Continued)

If you have asthma symptoms

Pay attention if you start having asthma symptoms. If they get worse or become severe, you may develop a severe asthma episode. This is sometimes called a flare-up or attack. Your airways tighten more than usual, making it harder to breathe.

Warning signs to watch for...

You may have symptoms or other warning signs that your asthma is getting worse. Knowing what these are can help you take action to prevent a severe asthma episode. Warning signs may include:

- Coughing, especially at night
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Drop in peak flow meter reading
- Breathing faster than normal
- Using your rescue inhaler more than usual
- Waking up at night with asthma symptoms
- Not being able to do your usual activities

Everyone's asthma symptoms can be different. It is important to be aware of what asthma is like for you. What early warning signs have you noticed?

Can you think of ways to help yourself be more aware of your asthma symptoms, like using a calendar to track your symptoms and your use of a rescue inhaler?

What to do if you have a severe asthma episode

- Follow your asthma action plan and directions from your healthcare provider.
- Take your rescue medicine as directed by your provider.
- Get help when you need it. Tell someone if you notice that you are having a hard time breathing.

Call 911 or go to the hospital if:

- You have trouble walking or talking, or
- Your lips or fingernails are blue, or
- Your rescue inhaler has not helped

Tell your healthcare provider about your asthma symptoms at each visit, and ask what you can do to help prevent them.



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